AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (New) A method for operating an internal combustion engine, comprising:

providing a quantity of fuel arriving in a combustion chamber that is a function of a triggering of a piezo actuator of a fuel injector;

providing a triggering energy by a buffer store;

determining, at least intermittently and at least approximately, a potential difference of the buffer store resulting in response to the triggering of the piezo actuator is ascertained; and

comparing the potential difference to at least one limiting value.

13. (New) The method as recited in Claim 12, further comprising:

determining an electrical energy with which the buffer store is charged between moments of ascertaining the potential difference of the buffer store;

ascertaining a charge exchanged between the piezo actuator and the buffer store on the basis of the electrical energy, the charge exchanged between the piezo actuator and the buffer store corresponding to a potential difference of the piezo actuator.

14. (New) The method as recited in Claim 13, further comprising:

one of adding and subtracting the electrical energy one of to and from the potential difference to produce one of an addition result and a subtraction result;

performing the comparing on the basis of the one of the addition result and the subtraction result.

15. (New) The method as recited in Claim 13, further comprising:

estimating the electrical energy with reference to a program map, into which is fed a supply current and a time duration between two ascertainments of the potential difference of the buffer store.

16. (New) The method as recited in Claim 13, further comprising:

deactivating a charging of the buffer store for determining the potential difference of the buffer store.

17. (New) The method as recited in Clam 12, wherein when the potential difference of the piezo actuator is equal to or greater than a first limiting value, at least one of:

an error entry is made corresponding to a short circuit, and

a corresponding action is initiated.

18. (New) The method as recited in Claim 17, wherein when the potential difference of the piezo actuator is equal to or less than the first limiting value and equal to or less than a second limiting value, at least one of:

the error entry is made corresponding to a load drop, and

the corresponding action is initiated.

19. (New) A computer program for operating an internal combustion engine that when executed results in a performance of the following:

providing a quantity of fuel arriving in a combustion chamber that is a function of a triggering of a piezo actuator of a fuel injector;

providing a triggering energy by a buffer store;

determining, at least intermittently and at least approximately, a potential difference of the buffer store resulting in response to the triggering of the piezo actuator is ascertained; and

comparing the potential difference to at least one limiting value.

20. (New) The computer program as recited in Claim 19, wherein the computer program is stored in a memory corresponding to a flash memory.

21. (New) The computer program as recited in Claim 20, wherein:

the computer program is stored in a memory of a control and/or regulating device for operating an internal combustion engine.